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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

New Road Leads to Soap Factory and Prosperity

USAID grant helps community to build a soap factory and create jobs.



Photo: IRD/SPR-SEA/Lutfullah

A trainer inspects bars of soap made by community members in Wazir. The USAID-funded factory enables workers to make soap for use in the village and for sale to outside markets.



Photo: IRD/SPR-SEA/Lutfullah

The soap is packaged professionally before it is delivered to market.

Roads connect communities to needed public services, such as health clinics, schools, and markets. Throughout Afghanistan, USAID is building roads and providing local communities with development projects along those roads, such as the construction of a soap factory in Nangarhar province. This community outreach approach generates income for local residents and demonstrates that roads bring development.

In August 2008, USAID started to build a road connecting the communities of Wazir and Khadakhel in the eastern province of Nangarhar. Once the construction began, USAID reached out to community members to design and implement a development project that would provide a sustainable source of income. The community requested a soap factory.

In March 2009, USAID issued a small grant to build the factory and provide training to approximately 40 community members on the fundamentals of producing, packaging, and marketing handmade soap. Community members worked shoulder to shoulder to build the factory, and the community contributed space to conduct the training.

The factory is now in the capable hands of the Wazir community, and the soap produced is being sold in the Wazir Bazaar, Kaga Bazaar, and even in Jalalabad.

“When we saw the first soap produced, people were simply astonished,” one of the trainees explained. “Before, soap was too expensive for us and many people could not afford it. The soap is now of good quality and much cheaper, because we have women and men trained to produce it themselves. Our effort will be successful because soap is the essential need of each family and we sell the soap not only in our own village but also in the nearby bazaars.”

Community development activities such as this foster support and ownership of the road and provide sustainable employment once the road is constructed. In the long term, the soap factory, the needed product it produces, and the jobs it creates will have a positive impact on the well-being of the Wazir community – much like the road itself.